(a) whether it is a fact that the downtrodden and the minority people in the country are living on less than twenty rupees a day;

(b) if so, whether Government is formulating any effective plan to change the standard of living of crores of such people; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) The Planning Commission estimates the incidence of poverty at National and State levels from the large sample survey on household consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. Based on this, only the percentage of population living below the poverty line has been estimated.

(b) and (c) Government is committed to ensuring the welfare of the minorities. The Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities which has specific programme interventions to improve the social, economic and educational status of minorities, is a major step in this direction. Three scholarship schemes *viz* merit-cum means based scholarship scheme, pre-matric scholarship scheme and post-matric scholarship scheme, free coaching and allied scheme and a multi-sectoral development programme are being implemented by this Ministry apart from the schemes and programmes of National Minorities Finance Development Corporation, Central Waqf Council and Maulana Azad Education Foundation. The details are available on the website *www.minorityaffairs.gov.in*.

Grants to Wakf Boards

2248. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the States which have large number of Wakfs like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab are not extending any grant-in-aid to their respective Wakf Boards and even to the Central Wakf Council (CWC);

(b) whether the Wakf Act maintains that the State Governments are duty bound to provide adequate financial support to them;

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to make if incumbent upon States to give financial support to the Boards;

(d) if not, the reaction therefor; and

(e) whether the Central Government has extended any support to CWC during the last three years and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (d) There is no provision in the Wakf Act, 1995 for mandatory financial support by the State Governments to the State Wakf Boards.

(e) No establishment/administrative grant is provided by the Central Government to the Central Wakf Council.